United Nations A/67/809–S/2013/180

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
25 March 2013
English
Original: Arabic

General Assembly
Sixty-seventh session
Agenda item 105
Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Security Council
Sixty-eighth year

Identical letters dated 22 March 2013 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I wish to draw your attention to the following:

On the evening of 21 March 2013, a suicide bomber detonated himself while the eminent religious scholar Muhammad Sa'id Ramadan al-Buti was teaching students at the Al-Iman mosque in the Mazra'a quarter of Damascus. Mr. Al-Buti and his grandson were killed and dozens of students were killed or injured. The suicide terrorist chose to detonate himself in the middle of the group, resulting in 49 deaths, 84 injuries and extensive material damage to the mosque.

The act of terrorism, which bears the hallmark of the Al-Qaida organization and its associates, is characteristic of the obscurantist and *takfirist* ideology which those groups seek to propagate through various means in Syria and around the world. They wish to destroy the values of tolerance and moderation on which the Islamic faith is based. The late scholar devoted his life to promoting those values and instilling love, peace and moderation among his students.

The atrocity is the latest of a succession of extremist *takfirist* terrorist crimes that show contempt and disdain for places of worship and other locations that deserve respect, such as schools, hospitals and universities, all of which have been targeted in other attacks.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic is determined to move forward in exercising its constitutional role by protecting its people from the terrorism of extremist *takfirist* groups and by cleansing Syria of extremist obscurantist ideology, which contradicts the value of coexistence that has prevailed in Syria throughout its history. The Syrian Government looks once again to the Security Council and demands that it condemn this terrorist atrocity, sending a clear message to the terrorists, and to those who give them political cover and material and logistical

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support, that the international community is determined to combat and prevail over terrorism, irrespective of its justification and wherever and whenever it occurs.

I should be grateful if this letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 105, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative